



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

immediately following the arrest by internal revenue agents of certain physicians and druggists who had been supplying narcotic drugs, and was opened because of the fear of possible consequences resulting from the sudden shutting off of the source of supply of the many addicts who had been obtaining drugs from the arrested persons and from others in the same business who had suspended operation because of being frightened by these arrests. This clinic was closed in March, 1920. An account of its operation, its failure, and the conclusions reached after its trial, was published in Public Health Reports for March 26, 1920,

In a recent report of a Committee of the Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology<sup>2</sup> occurs this statement:

It is now generally conceded that the so-called narcotic drug clinics, as conducted, have been a failure and probably no more municipalities will establish clinics of this type.

In view of the failure of the ambulatory treatment of drug addiction, it is believed that the action of the commissioner of health of Pennsylvania will stimulate other States whose laws authorize a similar interpretation by their administrative officials.

---

### PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING ABSTRACTS.

**State supervision of municipal water supplies.**—H. A. Whittaker, Director, Division of Sanitation, Minnesota State Board of Health.—*Journal-Lancet*, October 15, 1920.

The sanitary faults most commonly found in water supplies are (1) the use of surface waters without treatment; (2) the use of surface waters, with water-purification plants, in localities where underground supplies are preferable; (3) the installation of water-purification plants by local authorities possessing but little knowledge of the treatment methods; (4) the installation of chlorine plants to treat water that can not be properly purified with chlorine; (5) the addition of chlorine to raw water entering a filter plant, rather than to the effluent; (6) failure to provide duplicate parts of important equipment of water-purification plants; (7) the installation of by-passes around water-treatment plants; (8) the use of unskilled waterworks operators; (9) the location of exposed mains, reservoirs, etc., where they are subject to flooding with surface waters; (10) improper construction of well casings and covers; (11) the construction of pits around wells at the surface, in which all or part of the pumping equipment is located; (12) the connection of any part of the water-supply system with sewers or drains, making it possible for sewage or surface water

---

<sup>2</sup> Narcotic Drugs and Crime—Report of Committee (C) of the Institute. L. L. Stanley, resident physician, California State Prison, San Quentin, Calif.

to back up into the wells, well pits, etc., (13) the improper construction of underground and surface reservoirs; and (14) emergency connections between public and private water-supply systems.

These errors can be prevented if proper supervisory powers are afforded the State health authorities over all water supplies in the State. A well-organized subdivision with adequate engineering and laboratory facilities should be provided for this work.

The benefits of such supervision have been demonstrated in Minnesota, where the average annual typhoid death rate of 428 from 1900 to 1910 has been reduced to 82 in 1919, resulting in the year 1919 alone of a saving of \$1,380,000 in fees, not including the lives saved and the reduction in typhoid carriers.

**The de-watering of sewage sludge, with special reference to the Birmingham method.**—F. R. O'Shaughnessy, Consulting Chemist, Birmingham, England.—*Journal Royal Sanitary Institute*, volume 41, No. 2, September, 1920, page 147.

In the Birmingham Sludge Digestion Process the digestion chamber is separate from the sedimentation tank containing the crude sewage. When charged from the latter tank, the digestion chamber receives a dose of several hundred tons of crude sludge (about 90 per cent water) in a few hours.

In the process the sludge is made to undergo vigorous fermentation without causing nuisance, the action producing a black, inoffensive, mobile sludge with altered physical characteristics so that it readily parts with its aqueous content. The end product is pumped on prepared plots about one-half acre in area, which are leveled, drained, and covered with several inches of ashes, the depth of sludge being 18 inches. By drainage and evaporation the water escapes, leaving a firm, inodorous, peat-like solid about 6 inches thick, which is removed.

The results show one-third of the sludge to be destroyed by this exhaustive digestion. The action causes a change in the physical condition of the sludge from a highly complex colloidal state to a simple and practically noncolloidal state.

The presence of industrial wastes, such as tar, in the sewage at various times interferes with the action, and this condition requires careful attention in order to obtain good results.

**Novel application of copper sulphate to basin walls for control of algæ.**—George A. Bilkison, Chief Chemist, Water Department, Kansas City, Mo.—*Engineering and Contracting*, volume 54, No. 19, November 10, 1920, page 469.

The algal growth in seven storage basins, especially along the walls, causes offensive odors and trouble in the meters. Various methods were tried to prevent this growth. A satisfactory method now used

consists of applying a 5 per cent aqueous solution of copper sulphate, by means of a spray, directly to the algal growth on the basin walls after the water elevation in the basin is brought down below the algal line. After such application, a wire brush is used to scrub the walls.

With the use of this method every two months during warm weather the basin walls are kept comparatively free from algæ.

A rational program for the prevention of the pollution of our lakes and streams.—Paul Hansen, Consulting Engineer, Chicago, Ill.—*Illinois Medical Journal*, volume 38, No. 5, November, 1920, page 404.

A waterway must be regarded as both draining and watering the territory through which it flows. The treatment of polluted material entering a waterway will depend on whether the waterway is used for domestic purposes, fishing, bathing, or to remove industrial wastes. For domestic purposes, the water can be made practically safe by water purification. For bathing and fishing purposes, the quality of water should be similar to that of the best bathing beaches. Signs of pollution should not be evident to the senses. Where fishing is an important activity, the pollution should not be sufficient to harm the fish. For disposal of industrial wastes, waterways should provide sufficient clear water to prevent putrefactive decomposition.

The public does not object to waterway pollution to a limited degree. What really is wanted is clean waterways containing no pollution which will unduly jeopardize a reasonable use of our waterways by riparian owners or by the general public. It is a matter which can be effectively and satisfactorily handled by State departments of health, as has been proved in the State of Ohio and many other States. Technically speaking, the limitation of water pollution is best worked out when under the supervision of some expert authority operating under adaptable general laws which represent in broad terms the will of the people.

---

### PRINCIPAL CAUSES OF DEATH AMONG INSURED WAGE EARNERS.

COMPARISONS, BY COLOR, OF THE DEATH RATES FOR THE THIRD QUARTERS AND THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF 1918, 1919, AND 1920.

Among the 13,000,000 (approximately) insured wage earners in the industrial department of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. during the first nine months of 1920, the death rate was 10.2 per 1,000, or 9 per cent lower than the rate for the corresponding period of 1919. This suggests that, barring possible severe epidemics in the last quarter, 1920 will have an even better mortality rate than the record-breaking figure for 1919. The low death rate for tuberculosis